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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB/ESC/TFS (LRECHT) AND EUR (BROCKWELL)
TFFC (KLEAHY,MROSEN, ALARSON)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SWEDISH COURT ACQUITS LOCAL AL-AQSA HEAD ON
TERRORIST FINANCING CHARGES

REF: A. STATE 5834

[1](#)B. STOCKHOLM 85

[1](#)1. (U) On February 17, a Swedish court in the southern city of Malmo acquitted Khalid al-Yousef, head of the Stockholm-based al-Aqsa Spannmal Foundation, on charges of violating terrorist financing laws and violating sanctions laws. Al-Yousef had been accused of collecting nearly \$500,000 through the charitable foundation and funneling the money to various organizations with ties to Hamas. The court characterized the websites, newspaper articles and television reports presented by Chief Prosecutor Agneta Hilding Qvarnstrom as "very low value evidence."

[1](#)2. (U) The Malmo District Court added that Hamas has such wide-ranging support, it is quite possible that Hamas sympathizers and activists belong to some of these organizations in the area, but that does not automatically mean that the organization in question is part of Hamas. The Malmo District Court also stated that Hamas and Israel have a relationship to one another "akin a state of war," and that the fact that Israel has declared illegal a number of the organizations to which al-Yousef sent money is "of little importance to the court."

[1](#)3. (SBU) Comment: The Malmo court's terse comment and the fact that it ignored the freezing of the foundation's assets by the U.S., the U.K. and Sweden itself in 2006 in reaching its verdict provides insight into the degree of evidence required in Sweden to convict an individual on these charges. Malmo has a high concentration of Muslim immigrants and was the scene of recent riots sparked by a landlord refusing to renew a rental contract for a mosque located in a cellar.
SILVERMAN